

Gator Times



Burial at Sea

Nassau Honors Veterans

THE NAVY'S "TOP GATOR"

USS NASSAU (LHA 4)

Gator Times



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GatorTimes

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On The Cover:
The American Flag adorned with 21 bullets and white flowers at sunset during a burial at sea on board Nassau.
Photo illustration by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau



Captain's Call

Capt. Samuel Norton
Commanding Officer
USS Nassau (LHA 4)



Holiday season is here! I would like to first of all say how proud and pleased I was when I saw the list of all the Nassau Sailors who advanced to the next pay grade. There were also a quite a few strikers who made it as well, so congratulations all.

Remember over the holiday period to have a plan, prepare and execute. This applies to shopping, traveling and attending holiday celebrations. Please take the time to execute your plan not to drink and drive. Nassau has programs that allow Sailors to make it home safe and without incident such as the Safe Ride Program. Something as simple as having a sober shipmate drive you home will prevent DUIs and keep everyone on the road safe.

The Board of Inspection and Survey Visit has come and gone. I would like to thank you for putting on our game face and doing the best that we could do. I believe that we do a very good job at keeping the ship clean and very presentable, regardless of the fact that the ship is over 31 years old.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that the Holiday Party is coming up and I guarantee it's going to be a very entertaining and enjoyable time for all. Childcare will be provided at the Marriott Hotel. Make sure you dress nicely and to keep a sense of pride and professionalism about you like you do every day.

Happy Holidays from the Top Gator!!!!

CMC Corner

ITCM(SW/AW) Jeffery Barlow



Shipmates,

Nassau has completed her last official underway period and the crew did a great job as always. I commend you all for your professionalism and dedication to our country, our Navy and our ship.

It was a bittersweet occasion as we posed for the 1979-2011 photograph on the flight deck, then manned the rails upon our return to homeport one final time.

This will be the second ship I have decommissioned in my career and I have to say, personally, it is an emotional time to see the ship go from war fighter, full of life, to decommissioned, unmanned and no life.

I would like to take time to remember the former Nassau Sailors since it is them who paved the way for the "Top Gator" Sailors of today. They are the main reason Nassau has been able to complete successful missions over the past 31 years. Every Sailor to cross the brow and be privileged to serve aboard Nassau can take pride in the outstanding job they did keeping her in top fighting shape throughout her life. As it stands, decommissioning preparations are in

the beginning phase. We will commence our Decommissioning Maintenance Availability Period on Dec. 8, 2010 and hold the decommissioning ceremony on March 31, 2011. There is a lot of work to be completed during that time period. We have to ensure all spaces on the ship are closed out and we also have to leave Nassau in good shape so that she can be re-activated within 120 days if called upon by our Nation.

In the meantime, we will be transitioning onto a Barge for operations. While the Barge is designed somewhat like the ship, Sailors can expect the spaces to be smaller with less computers and office space so it will be a change from what we are used to on board Nassau. We will also have approximately 100 officer and enlisted personnel living aboard the Barge until transfers are complete. There will be a berthing area set aside for the duty section. Duty section personnel can expect to bring in an overnight bag for their duty days because every duty section will use the same berthing space.

I wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

SRFB Goes Beyond Minimum Reqs

Story & photo by MCSN Ian Carver
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau (LHA 4) has gone above and beyond the fleet minimum for a command size such as the "Top Gator" for Ships Reactionary Force (SRFB) qualifications of crew members.

The SRFB course teaches Sailors how to stand a proper watch and covers close quarter hand to hand combat, restraint procedures and the effects of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray.

Fleet minimum for SRFB qualifications on a ship the size of Nassau is only 234 Sailors, yet Nassau has more than 590 currently qualified, according to Senior Chief Master at Arms (SW/AW) Derek Oglesby, SRFB instructor. He said that with more qualified Sailors aboard Nassau, it allows more flexibility within duty sections for watch rotations.

OC spray is a lachrymatory agent, a chemical compound that irritates the eyes to cause tears, pain, and even temporary blindness. The active ingredient in OC is capsaicin, which is a chemical derived from the fruit of plants in the Capsicum genus, including chili peppers. Nassau uses a water based OC spray product known as First Defense MK-4, said Oglesby.

"It's a great psychological weapon; people know it goes hand in hand with pain," said Oglesby.

The SRFB class culminates with Sailors getting sprayed with OC while undergoing a battery of force protection stations such as punches, knee strikes, baton strikes and physically subduing an assailant. Start to finish, the OC portion of the course can take up to 10 to 12 minutes leaving the Sailor incredibly tired and in physical discomfort from the spray.

"The second you get sprayed it feels like 50 percent of your energy has been taken away," said Oglesby.

The effects of the spray can last up to a few hours yet there are some things that can help reduce the discomfort, said Oglesby. He said since the spray is water based, cold water is one of the best treatments and that the next best thing to help is baby shampoo.

Oglesby recommends the class to all Sailors as a way to make themselves more marketable to the



ET3 Vanessa Rowe is sprayed with OC spray during SRFB qualifications in the Hangar Deck.

Navy. Plus, the SRFB qualification stays on the Sailors' records throughout their careers.

Due to Nassau decommissioning, the last SRFB course concluded Nov. 19. However, Sailors can try to get the SRFB qualification at their next commands.

"Sailors who have gone through the course feel more confident in their ability to stand an armed watch," said Yeoman Seaman Recruit David C. Baxter, administrative departmental yeoman and SRFB qualified Sailor. "The SRFB class is something I would recommend to any sailor regardless of how long they have been in, it can only benefit you in the end."

Nassau Buries Veterans Out To Sea

Story & photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau (LHA 4) honored 12 military veterans with burial at sea ceremonies held Nov. 17 during the ship's final underway.

Burial at sea requests come from the United States Navy Descendent Affairs Office and Navy ships are asked to carry them out. Nassau took to honoring America's veterans by volunteering for multiple burials.

Veterans who served from World War II up until Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as a World War II veteran and his wife were among the cremations cast to the sea in the ceremony.

"The last time I did burials at sea on a different ship we only performed one for a crew member's grandfather," said Nassau's Command Chaplain Lt. Victoria Chappell. "We laid 10 veterans to rest Oct. 27 and 12 more just a few days after Veteran's Day. It is a challenge to prepare for so many at once, but it is also an honor to be a part of the last moments of the veterans who served before us."

Chappell said that the ship's Commanding Officer Capt. Samuel Norton and Executive Officer Capt. Gregory Romero's dedication to honoring the fallen is the driving force behind Nassau carrying out 22 burials in a month's time.

"There is a waiting list to be buried at sea and it can take several months for the requests to be filled," said Chappell. "When I call the families to inform them of their upcoming burial they are always so happy that their loved ones are finally being laid to rest. They always say how much of a relief it is to have that closure on their family member's last wish."

Burials at sea begin with a dedication and a prayer for the deceased, sometimes selected by family. Once the prayer is finished, the deceased is passed into the ocean and the honor guard follow with a 21 gun salute. The urn bearer presents the American flag to the ship's Command Master Chief (CMDM) who then hands it to the highest ranking ship's officer present, normally the commanding or executive officer.

"It's such a solemn ceremony but being a part of it is truly an honor," said Information Systems Techni-



HM1(SW/AW/FMF) Marshall Davis and MMC(SW/AW) David Hartley launch the remains of CS2 Anthony Pitale during a burial at sea in Nassau's Hangar Deck.

cian 3rd Class (SW/AW) Daniel Wesner, from Coral Springs, Fla. Wesner was able to have his grandfather, a veteran, buried at sea on Oct. 27. Since Wesner is a part of Nassau's crew, he was able to participate in the ceremony by presenting the urn for burial and presenting the American flag to Senior Enlisted Leader ITCS(SW/AW) Jeffrey Barlow. This is rare because the next of kin are not usually present due to military ships being underway for long periods of time.

"Everything is done so formally, from the slow salutes to properly presenting the flag. I was a little nervous but I'm happy with the way it turned out," said Wesner.

Wesner said he traded sea stories via e-mail with his grandfather during the ship's 2010 deployment. However, his grandfather passed away near the end of the underway and Wesner was not able to make it home.

"My grandfather was in the Navy for 32 years and his final wish was a burial at sea because he loved the Navy so much," said Wesner. "Although I was not able to fly back before he died, participating in his burial helped me come to terms with his passing."



ACAN(AW/SW) Joseph Gilbert and AM3 Nicholas Jonte pick up the remains and the Ensign for burial and presentation during a burial at sea in Nassau's Hangar Deck.



Sailors aboard Nassau stand at parade rest during a burial at sea in the Hangar Deck.

*We therefore commit this body to the deep,
Looking for the general Resurrection in the Last Day,
And the life of the world to come, through our Lord
Jesus Christ; at whose second coming in glorious majesty
To judge the world, the Sea shall give up her dead...*



Capt. Gregory Romero and ITCM(SW/AW) Jeffrey Barlow salute during a burial at sea in Nassau's Hangar Deck.



AO3(AW/SW) Chris Sutton and AOAN(AW) Juan Veloz stand at parade rest as part of the rifle detail during a burial at sea in Nassau's Hangar Deck.



The remains of Chief Quartermaster Donald F. Haddox.



Presentation of the Ensign during a burial at sea.



Sailors aboard Nassau stand at parade rest during a burial at sea in the Hangar Deck.



ABHAN(AW) James Spencer, ABHAN (AW) Collin Robertson, and ABHAN (AW/SW) Brandon McMillan stand watch on the Flight Deck during night vision flight operations. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau



Nassau crewmembers form '1979-2011,' the years the "Top Gator" was in service, on the Flight Deck. Photo by MC3(SW) Chris Williamson

(Above) QM3(SW/AW) Jamar Code explains the sea chart navigation process to ESG 2 Rear Adm. Kevin D. Scott while he tours Nassau's Bridge. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau

(Right) Ensign Apphia Maxima, conning officer, and Lt. Cmdr. Joseph Droll, officer of the deck, observe the Nassau's movement from the Bridge as she departs for her final underway. Photo by MC2 Kristan Robertson



Nassau's Last



Nassau Sailors walk to their positions around the Flight Deck to man the rails as the ship pulls in from her final underway before decommissioning. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau



ABH3(AW/SW) Richard Sharpe signals a MV-22B Osprey from VMM-162 "Golden Eagles" to take off from the Flight Deck during night vision flight operations. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau



BM3(SW/AW) Dwayne Todd, the Ramp Marshall during Condition 1A Well Deck operations, guides Landing Craft Air Cushion "Hopper 25" from Assault Craft Unit 4 into Nassau's Well Deck. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau



QMSN Steven Nagy, QMSN Darius Lisman, and QM3(SW) Demetrius Washington fly the Battle Ensign over Nassau as she pulls in from her final underway. Photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau

Underway

Background photo by MCSN(SW/AW) Jonathan Pankau

Steamin' Divas Heat Up Nassau's Boilers

Story & photo by MC3(SW) Chris Williamson
USS Nassau Public Affairs



FN(SW) Katrina Palmer lights the torch used to ignite burner barrels in Nassau's Main Propulsion Plant Two.

The heart of USS Nassau (LHA 4) can be found in the engine rooms, and the "Steaming Divas," a group of four female engineers in Nassau's Aft Main Propulsion Plant, help keep that heart alive every day.

The Steaming Divas, as they're known aboard Nassau, include Machinist Mate Fireman Whitney Collins, MMFN Shanae Miller-Ashton, Fireman (SW) Katrina Palmer, and FN(SW) Ana Vazquez.

"We work together like sisters to get any job done right the first time and with speed," said Collins, one of the newest engineers onboard, and the Aft Plant Messenger of the Watch. "Every day we prove to people we can do the job just as well as the men and still keep up with everything."

Like the men, they are required to perform heavy physical work and they must be able to work closely with others and sometimes with limited supervision. All engineers work down in the main engineering spaces or "pits," doing their job in the hottest and noisiest areas on the ship. It is in these spaces where they operate and maintain steam turbines, reduction gears used for ship propulsion, and auxiliary machinery such as

turbogenerators, pumps, and oil purifiers. They also maintain auxiliary machinery such as electrohydraulic steering engines and elevators, refrigeration plants, and air conditioning systems.

"We carry the weight and responsibility of the ship and we carry it well," said Vazquez. "Often times, we are expected to do our jobs without sleep, food, or appreciation. But no matter what your job is, you're expected to do your best under every circumstance. Even though hardship exists, the quality and performance of the entire ship rests with us."

The Divas agree that they enjoy being engineers because of the hands-on job and the training.

"I love to work with my hands and to learn about how the entire ship functions," said Vazquez, a Lower Level Machinist Mate watch stander. "Whatever ship I go to next, I will understand the hard work that goes into maintaining a Navy vessel and the importance of performance. The ship and all our lives are at stake if we fail."

"One advantage to being an engineer is that I can complete a lot of training," said Palmer. "I can get what I need to for warfare designators, watch standing requirements and on-the-job training."

With any job there can be added responsibilities that others around the ship do not always have to face. All the engineers are responsible for keeping the ship in working condition, which leaves little time for liberty and instead, preparing the ship for underways and various inspections.

"It's disheartening to see other divisions leave the ship while you know you can't," said Vazquez. "We still have to stand watches and no matter what happens we are accountable for the entire ship's status. If I fail at my station, it affects all the other watch stations and that means we could lose power, water, or propulsion."

Vazquez added that it would be nice to see more female engineers honored for their dedication to their jobs and respected for the conditions they work under.

"It's always going to be harder for females to get respect whether they're new or have been around for awhile," said Palmer. "We have to prove ourselves a hundred times more than anyone else so that others notice us working just as hard as the males. But we get the job done either way, and that's what matters."

Chaplain's Corner



Chaplain's Corner provided by USS Nassau
Command Religious Programs

That was the day in 1918 when hostilities ceased in the "War to End All Wars"-World War II.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson declared November 11th as Armistice Day, a day...

"...filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory..."

President Dwight D. Eisenhower changed the name of the holiday to Veterans Day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Today the honors of this solemn day continue:

"America's sons and daughters have not watched over her shores or her citizens for the public recognition, fanfare, or parades. They have preserved our way of life with unwavering patriotism and quiet courage, and ours is a debt of honor to care for them and their families. These obligations do not end after their time of service and we must fulfill our sacred trust to care for our veterans after they retire their uniforms."

As a grateful Nation, we are humbled by the sacrifices rendered by our service members and their families out of the deepest sense of service and love of country. On Veterans Day, let us remember our solemn obligations to our veterans, and recommit to upholding the enduring principles that our country lives for, and that our fellow citizens have fought and died for." - President Barack Obama

Locally, service members celebrated the day by attending parades, visiting veterans in nursing homes, visiting gravesites, and by accepting the generosity of local business, some of which provided free meals and services.

Veterans day was a day in which the country prayed for you: the crew and families of this great Navy who have answered the call and serve distinctively with honor, courage, and commitment. May your days of service and all your days be blessed.

Veterans Day
November 2010

Photo Illustration by the Air Force News Agency

Authority to Assume the Title and Wear the Uniform of a Petty Officer

First Class Petty Officers

IS1 Ricord

Second Class Petty Officers

DC2 Carpenter AZ2 Malcom
HM2 Chroch MA2 Nickell
OS2 Cotto LS2 Novelly
MM2 Dolangoda CS2 Roby
MM2 Estrada EN2 Smith
OS2 Frell MA2 Spence
CTR2 Galloway MM2 Stampf
ET2 Garces SH2 Willis
AC2 Illamane AE2 Wong
PT2 Ingram BM2 Wrobel
PT2 Jones PT2 York
PT2 Krapp

Third Class Petty Officers

ABH3 Argenau CS3 McCoy
EM3 Bantjen SH3 McKenna
BM3 Biggs DC3 McNiff
BM3 Bolt AO3 Meier
MM3 Brown QM3 Nagy
MC3 Carver MC3 Pankau
PT3 Charette HT3 Patterson
QM3 Colbert OS3 Ramirez
HM3 Conley HM3 Rider
EM3 Crosby BM3 Rodgers
LS3 Delacour MM3 Scott
JC3 Eaton ABH3 Smith
CS3 Elston IS3 Spires
CS3 Gardner BM3 Tatum
AC3 Gilbert OS3 Terrell
OS3 Gooden ABF3 Wadekin
EN3 Hendley PR3 Watson
PT3 Jones PT3 Wescott
BM3 Katorski AT3 White
QM3 Lianan PT3 Yauensei
MM3 Mayo

